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# POINTS OF COMPARISON BETWEEN ZOROASTRIANISM AND THE MOON-CULT OF ḤARRÂN

By HILDEGARD LEWY

In the opinion of some medieval savants, a close connection existed between Zoroaster and the sectarians known as "the Ṣābians of Ḥarrân" or simply "the Ḥarrânians". In his *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, al-Bīrūnī remarks that "Zoroaster took over half (of his doctrine) from the Ḥarrânians",<sup>1</sup> while elsewhere in the same book he stresses that the creed of the Zoroastrian community "is derived from the laws of the Sun-worshippers and the ancient people of Ḥarrân".<sup>2</sup> Again in another passage (not contained in Sachau's edition), al-Bīrūnī quotes Zoroaster as having written in an astrological work that, as a young man, he studied in Ḥarrân.<sup>3</sup> As such statements of the great Iranian scholar of the past cannot be lightly dismissed, it seems appropriate to dedicate a brief discussion of these allusions to a great Iranian savant of the present who has devoted so much of his life's work to the study of Zoroastrianism.

## I. *Ḥarrân and its Deities in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*

The city of Ḥarrân in Mesopotamia was a famous cult center throughout antiquity. In a letter from the time of king Zimri-Lim of Mari

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<sup>1</sup> *Chronologie Orientalischer Völker von Albêrûnî*, ed. Sachau, Leipzig, 1878, p. 28, l. 2: زَرَادَشْتٌ وَهُوَ نَصَفَ الْحَرَّانِيَّةَ. Our reading نَصَفَ instead of نَصُفَ of the edition makes it unnecessary to emend the text as proposed by Sachau on p. 376 of his translation; for as it stands, the text is in full agreement with the passage quoted in the next footnote.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 318, l. 6.

<sup>3</sup> The passage was first communicated and translated by S. H. Taqizadeh in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, VIII, 4, 1937, pp. 949 and 952. The full text of the gap on p. 206 of Sachau's edition of the *Chronology* is now published by Johann Fück, *Documenta Islamica inedita*, Berlin, 1952, pp. 74ff., sub II.

(1777–1746 B.C.) mention is made of a treaty which the tribe of Benjamin concluded with the kinglets of some neighboring states “in the temple of Sîn of Ḥarrân”.<sup>1</sup> In the Neo-Assyrian period, Ḥarrân was one of the royal cities of the empire. Both Esarhaddon and his successor, Aššur-bân-apli, proceeded in the beginning of their rule to Ḥarrân in order to receive the royal tiara from “Sîn who dwells in Ḥarrân”.<sup>2</sup> After a short eclipse prompted by the downfall of the Assyrian empire, Ḥarrân again rose to major importance when the scion of a Ḥarrânian family, king Nabû-na'id,<sup>3</sup> became ruler of Babylonia (555–539 B.C.). The medieval Ḥarrânians were well aware of the important rôle their city had played in antiquity. For, as reported by an-Nadîm, they prayed once a year, on a solemn occasion, for “the restitution to them of their empire and the days of their domination”.<sup>4</sup>

The continuity of the medieval Ḥarrânian tradition is revealed not only by this historical reminiscence. Their principal deity was still the Moon-god Sîn;<sup>5</sup> his titles and epithets were the same as in antiquity: *Bêl Ḥarrâna*, as the deity is occasionally called,<sup>6</sup> corresponds to the Assyrian epithet *Bêl Ḥarrân*;<sup>7</sup> the titles إِلَه الْأَهِة, “god of the

<sup>1</sup> See the passage quoted by G. Dossin, *Mélanges Syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud*, II, Paris, 1939, p. 986.

<sup>2</sup> See the passages quoted by J. Lewy, *The Late Assyro-Babylonian Cult of the Moon and its Culmination at the Time of Nabonidus*, *Hebrew Union College Annual*, XIX, 1946, pp. 456ff.

<sup>3</sup> Nabû-na'id's mother, Adad-guppi, was a native of Ḥarrân; for the text of her much-discussed funerary inscription see now C. J. Gadd, *The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus*, *Anatolian Studies*, VIII, 1958, pp. 46ff.

<sup>4</sup> See his *Kitâb ul-Fihrist* (ed. Flügel, Leipzig, 1871–2), p. 324, ll. 15f.

<sup>5</sup> The name Sîn is used by al-Bîrûnî, *op. cit.*, p. 205, ll. 16ff., and in the *Fihrist*, p. 321, l. 29; p. 322, l. 11, and p. 325, l. 5. Cf. further the name *Dair Sînâî*, “Shrine of Sîn”, of one of the sanctuaries of Ḥarrân. The form سَلِين (instead of سِين) listed by Flügel, *op. cit.*, II, p. 159, as occurring in one of the variants of the passage p. 321, ll. 29ff. explains why one of the numerous references to the god of Ḥarrân contained in the *Fihrist* (p. 322, l. 4) characterized Sîn not as إِلَه but as إِلَهِة: A copyist acquainted with Greek mythology obviously mistook سِين for a scribal error for سَلِين, “Selene”, and therefore believed that the god of Ḥarrân was a female deity.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Bîrûnî, *op. cit.*, p. 320, l. 5.

<sup>7</sup> This designation of the Moon-god occurs not infrequently in Neo-Assyrian personal names; see K. Tallqvist, *Assyrian Personal Names*, *Acta Societas Scient. Fennicae*, XLIII, 1, Helsingfors, 1914, pp. 56f.

gods", and رَبِّ الْإِلَهِ <sup>1</sup>, "lord of the gods" are translations of Sîn's Akkadian attributes *ilâni*<sup>MEŠ2</sup> *ša ilâni*<sup>MEŠ</sup> and *bêl ilâni*<sup>MEŠ</sup>.<sup>3</sup>

Sîn's divine consort who bears in Akkadian sources the colorless name Ningal, "The Great Lady", is called by the medieval Ḥarrânians Ḥarrânît.<sup>4</sup> That both designations refer to the same goddess can be inferred from an-Nadîm's remark that Ḥarrânît was the mother of the gods enumerated by him previously. In Akkadian texts, Ningal is characterized as *ummu ilâni rabûti*, "mother of the great gods".<sup>5</sup> Far more important, however, is the statement (an-Nadîm, p. 325, ll. 20f.) that "hers were six evil spirits" and that "she used to proceed with them to the seashore". In as much as this implies that Ḥarrânît was one of the seven evil spirits which, as will be

<sup>1</sup> For the former title see aš-Šahristânî's *Kitâb al-milal wa'l-nihâl*, ed. Cureton, London, 1846, p. 203, l. 17; ad-Dimišqî's *Cosmographie*, ed. M. A. F. Mehren, St. Pétersbourg, 1866, p. 47. For the latter see *Fihrist*, p. 325, l. 18.

<sup>2</sup> The plural *ilâni*<sup>MEŠ</sup> must be regarded as a pluralis majestatis; cf. H. Lewy, *Origin and Significance of the Mâgên Dâwîd, Symbolae Hrozny*, IV (*Archiv Orientalni*, XVIII), 1950, p. 347, note 82.

<sup>3</sup> The former title is used in Nabû-na'id's foundation cylinder from the stage-tower at Ur, col. I, l. 29; col. II, l. 5 (for a transliteration and translation of this inscription see S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften, Vorderasiatische Bibliothek*, IV, Leipzig, 1912, pp. 250ff., No. 5); for the latter see col. I, l. 28 and col. II, l. 3 of the same text.

<sup>4</sup> This name, which was no longer understood in the Middle Ages, appears in Arabic sources in various misspellings. An-Nadîm, for instance, in his enumeration of the Ḥarrânian deities (*op. cit.*, p. 325, l. 20), writes حساب or حسان (for the variants see Flügel, *op. cit.*, I, p. 160), while al-Bîrûnî, in his list of Ḥarrânian festivals (p. 321), offers, under Aiar 11, 12, 13, and 15, the spelling جروشيا or the like. The correct reading can be inferred from the following data: In a legend told by the Alexandrian bishop Eutychius (see *Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*; interpret Edwardo Pocockio, *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. Migne, vol. CXI, Paris, 1863, p. 923, sub 72) and dealing with the first construction of the Moon-temple of Ḥarrân, Sîn's spouse appears as خانيب. Yet in two variant versions of this legend (see Baudissin, *Zeitsch. der Deutschen Morgenländ. Ges.*, LXVI, 1912, p. 172, note), viz., in the Syriac work known as *The Cave of the Treasures* (ed. Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle*, II, Leipzig, 1888; see p. 154, ll. 13f.) and in a work of Gregorius al-Makîn (we quote this authority according to Johann H. Hottinger, *Smegma Orientale*, Heidelberg, 1658, p. 324, who excerpted large parts of the text of al-Makîn's work), the name is written Ḥaranît and جرايب, respectively. The reading Ḥarrânît is all the more plausible since other Assyrian and Babylonian city goddesses were referred to in a like manner: Aššurîtum was the divine patroness of Aššur, Kišîtum that of Kiš, etc.

<sup>5</sup> See Nabû-na'id's text No. 1 (*Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, V, London, 1884, No. 64, transliterated and translated by Langdon, *op. cit.*, pp. 218ff., No. 1), col. II, l. 38.



presently seen, played an important rôle in the cult of the Moon, it corresponds to the designation of Ningal as *dZaṣṣu* (*dsr*)-*VII<sup>bi</sup>* which occurs in an explanatory list of gods.<sup>1</sup> As on several Ḥarrānian coins from the time of Antoninus Caracalla (A.D. 211–17) the city-goddess is represented with a serpent,<sup>2</sup> it may further be concluded that this deity was symbolized by a snake. This again is a millennia-old tradition; for on numerous Old Assyrian seal impressions<sup>3</sup> the Moon-god<sup>4</sup> is accompanied by a snake shown either behind or before his throne.

Among the lesser deities listed by an-Nadīm as belonging to the Ḥarrānian pantheon there is a pair of twins, one of whom is called فسفر (p. 325, l. 18), i.e., Phosphor(os), “the light-bearer”, while the other bears the name قوسطر, i.e., “Castor” (*ibidem*, l. 19), “one of two twins”. These two deities are known in Akkadian mythology as Bilgi, “The Flame”, and Nusku. They impersonate the planet Mercury as evening and morning star, respectively.<sup>5</sup> In later Akkadian sources which reflect the time when the identity of the two pairs of inferior planets<sup>6</sup> was recognized, only Nusku appears in the usual enumerations of Ḥarrānian gods.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See K.2054 published in *Cun. Inscriptions of Western Asia*, V, pl. XXX, No. 1 (= *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, XVIII, pl. 29), col. I, l. 46 a b. That *sr* has here the meaning *zaṣṣu*, “wind”, “storm” (see Deimel, *Sumerisches Lexikon*, I, Rome, 1925, No. 112, 24) can be inferred from a comparison of the words AN VII<sup>bi</sup> KI VII<sup>bi</sup> SI VII<sup>bi</sup> AMA VII<sup>bi</sup>, as found in the Leiden text No. 1005 (see Böhl, *Mededeelingen uit de Leidsche Verzameling van Spijkerschrift-Inscripties*, II, *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afd. Letterkunde, 78, serie B, No. 2, Amsterdam, 1934, pp. 31f.) with the phrase AN VII KI VII IM VII IM-GAL VII (see *obv.*, col. II, l. 19 of the text K.2542, etc., published by Langdon, *Historical and Religious Texts from the Temple Library in Nippur [The Babyl. Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania]*, XXXI, München, 1914, No. 60; for a transliteration and translation see *ibidem*, pp. 58ff.); for *sr* VII<sup>bi</sup> of the Leiden text has obviously the same or a similar meaning as IM VII in the Kouyunjik tablet.

<sup>2</sup> See G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia*, London, 1922, pl. XII, Nos. 21 and 22; cf. p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., J. Lewy, *Tablettes Cappadociennes*, 3<sup>me</sup> série, 3<sup>me</sup> partie (*Musée du Louvre, Textes Cunéiformes*, XXI), pl. CCXXXIV, Nos. 54, 64, and 65.

<sup>4</sup> That the seated deity on these seal pictures is the Moon-god is indicated by the crescent enclosing a disk which, in turn, encloses a star. This symbol, too, recurs with slight variations on Ḥarrānian coins of later periods; see, e.g., Hill, *op. cit.*, pl. XII, No. 9.

<sup>5</sup> On these two deities see H. and J. Lewy, *The God Nusku, Orientalia*, N.S., 17, 1948, pp. 146ff.

<sup>6</sup> Namely Venus and Mercury, both of which are seen as morning and evening star.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., col. II, ll. 10 and 14 of the afore-quoted funerary inscription

An-Nadīm further lists a Ḥarrānian god Tamūzā;<sup>1</sup> the same deity recurs in al-Bīrūnī's list of Ḥarrānian festivals under the seventh day of Ḥazīrān (p. 321, l. 7), on which day he was remembered with lamentation and weeping. This deity corresponds to the well-known Sumero-Akkadian god Tammūz or Dumuzi, the god of vegetation whose annual death and resurrection were celebrated throughout the ancient Near East. Two further deities occurring in al-Bīrūnī's festal calendar deserve mention because, much as Tamūzā, they preserved their Akkadian names with only minor changes: Bēltān, used in p. 320, l. 18 with reference to the planet Venus<sup>2</sup> stands for Assyrian Bēltāni, "Our Lady",<sup>3</sup> while ديلفان (p. 321, l. 11) is a dual of Dilbat, the Akkadian astronomical designation of the planet Venus, the dual apparently being due to the fact that Venus is both evening and morning star.<sup>4</sup>

As it would require too much space to parallel each of the Ḥarrānian festivals enumerated by al-Bīrūnī and an-Nadīm with the corresponding Assyrian celebrations, we limit ourselves to mentioning that an *akītu*-festival was celebrated by the medieval Ḥarrānians for their tutelary god, Sīn. Evidence to this effect is contained in a story told by an-Nadīm (p. 325, ll. 23ff.) which begins as follows: "And among their (i.e., the Ḥarrānians') gods was the water-idol (صنم الماء), that which disappeared from among the gods<sup>5</sup> in the days of the Pleiades".<sup>6</sup> The *Fihrist* continues to relate that the "water-idol"

of Nabū-na'id's mother; or col. III, l. 23 of Nabū-na'id's inscription H 2 (published by Gadd, *loc. cit.*, pp. 56ff. and pl. IXff.).

<sup>1</sup> That this, and not Tamūrā, is the correct reading of this divine name was observed by Baudissin, *loc. cit.*, p. 171ff.

<sup>2</sup> The reading بلتان instead of بليان of the edition was first proposed by J. Lewy, *Orientalia*, N.S., 15, 1946, p. 375, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> On this form see J. Lewy, *loc. cit.*, p. 369, note 9.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. above, p. 142, notes 5f. and see the present writer's study *The Babylonian Background of the Kay Kâūs Legend*, *Symbolae Hrozny*, II (*Archiv Orientalni*, XVII, 2), 1949, p. 40, note 60.

<sup>5</sup> سَقَطَ بَيْنَ الْاِلَهِةِ is occasionally used for the setting of the Moon and particularly for the disappearance of the Pleiades (سَقَطَ النّجْم); see Lane, s.v. سَقَطَ. In our passage, the term therefore seems to indicate that the deity in question (in whom we shall presently recognize the Moon) was thought to disappear together with the Pleiades. See also the next footnote.

<sup>6</sup> فِي أَيَّامِ اسْطَةِ وَطَرِنْتَقُوسِ. We read, with a slight emendation (ر instead of و and ة), Αστηρ Τυραννικος, "The Tyrannic Star". As the context requires

left Ḥarrân followed by the townspeople who implored it to return, which it eventually consented to do; and each year, on the twentieth day of Nîsân, the Ḥarrânians went out to await its return. In order to understand this relation it must be remembered that in the major cities of Assyria and Babylonia an *akîtu*-festival was celebrated each year in honor of the city's patron god. In the course of this celebration, the statue of the god proceeded, first by chariot and then by barge, on a river, from its metropolitan sanctuary to a suburban shrine, the *akîtu*-temple. This exodus symbolized the deity's descent to the Netherworld, the crossing of the "River of the Dead" being represented by the procession by barge on the nearest river or stream. Since it is known from several Sumerian compositions glorifying the Moon-god "when, in Ur, he mounteth the sacred barge"<sup>1</sup> that the barge-procession played a particularly important part in the cult of the Moon, it becomes apparent that the "water-idol" in an-Nadîm's story was the Moon-god of Ḥarrân en route to his *akîtu*-temple. The Moon-god's departure is known to have taken place on the day of the Moon's conjunction with the Pleiades preceding the latter constellation's heliacal setting, an event which fell between the fifteenth and twentieth day of the month of Adâru.<sup>2</sup> The designation "days of the

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the designation of a certain season of the year, it is clear that the "Tyrannic Star" cannot be a planet but must be a fixed star or fixed star constellation determining the date of the annual celebration. Which constellation is meant follows from the Akkadian ritual text VAT 8996 (published by Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, III, Leipzig, 1919, No. 141; for a transliteration and translation see Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1931, No. 22, pp. 87ff.), which refers to an invocation addressed to [ka]kkab Zappu aš-tu-ma, "The Pleiades, the tyrannic (star)"; on the identity of MUL.MUL or kakkab Zappu with the Pleiades see Kugler, *Sternkunde und Sterndienst in Babel*, Ergänzungen zum I. und II. Buch, Münster, 1913, pp. 23ff., 46, and 152f.

<sup>1</sup> See especially ll. 19ff. of the hymn VATh. 414 published by Reisner, *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln griechischer Zeit*, Berlin, 1896, No. 38; for the latest translation see A. Falkenstein in A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, *Sumerische und Akkadische Hymnen und Gebete*, Zürich-Stuttgart, 1953, No. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Two Neo-Assyrian letters, 81-7-27,30 and K.1234 (published by Harper, *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire*, VII, 1902, No. 667, and II, 1893, No. 134) mention the 17th day of an unnamed month as the date on which the statue of Sin left Ḥarrân for the *akîtu*-temple. That his month must have been Adâru follows from the following consideration: According to the astronomical commentary B.M. 86378 (published by King, *Cun. Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, XXXIII, London, 1912, pl. I-VIII; for a transliteration see Weidner, *Handbuch der babylonischen Astronomie*, I,



Pleiades" in an-Nadīm's account therefore obviously refers to the days between the conjunction and the annual disappearance of the Pleiades.<sup>1</sup>

## II. *The Dualistic Principle in the Religion of Ḥarrân*

As this brief survey makes it clear that the pantheon as well as the ritual of the medieval Ḥarrânians perpetuated the millennia-old Assyro-Babylonian Moon-cult, we are safe in relying not only on medieval Ḥarrânian but also on Akkadian sources when attempting to determine the character of this religion. As a general rule, the deities of the ancient inhabitants of Babylonia and Assyria can be characterized as the impersonators of phenomena of nature, the qualities ascribed to each god being derived from the effect of the respective phenomenon on mankind. To illustrate the point, we refer to Enlil, the chief deity of the Sumerian pantheon whose name characterizes him as the "Lord Wind". Being a wind, Enlil was assumed to bring the rain-carrying clouds and thus, by filling the rivers and canals with water, to promote agricultural life. Accordingly, he was revered as a god of fertility, as the father who created food and drink for men and animals.<sup>2</sup> However, Enlil also embodied tempests and hurricanes, and in this quality he was dreaded as a most destructive and deadly god.<sup>3</sup> A similarly two-natured deity was Šamaš, the Sun-god. Without his light and his warmth neither human nor plant or animal life was possible on earth. On the other hand, the Sun can also burn up the crops, dry out the rivers and, by sunstroke, kill men and animals. The religions which centered around deities like Enlil and Šamaš were

Leipzig, 1915, pp. 35-9), col. IV, ll. 15f., the heliacal rising of the Pleiades took place on Aiaru 1. As the heliacal setting of the Pleiades precedes their rising by from 39 to 42 days, the setting must have been fixed between Adâru 17 and Adâru 21. The conjunction of the Pleiades with the Moon fell a few days before their setting. In fact, in a letter of king Šamši-Adad I of Assyria (1815-1783 B.C.), Adâru 16 is mentioned as the date of an *akîtu*-festival (see G. Dossin, *Archives Royales de Mari*, I, Paris, 1950, No. 50, ll. 5f.).

<sup>1</sup> From an-Nadīm's relation it would appear that at the time when he gathered his information only the return of the statue to Ḥarrân, on Nisân 20, was celebrated by the townspeople who gathered at a site called *Dair Kâḡlî*. To judge by al-Birûnî's report, *op. cit.*, p. 320, sub Adâr 8, the 31 days of the god's absence were taken up by lamentation and fasting.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., rev., ll. 2ff. of the hymn to Enlil, B.M. 13963 published by King, *Cun. Texts from Babyl. Tablets in the British Museum*, XV, London, 1902, pl. X. For the latest translation see A. Falkenstein in Falkenstein and von Soden, *op. cit.*, pp. 76f., No. 11.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., ll. 4ff. of the text B.M. 29644 published by King, *op. cit.*, pl. XI; for the latest translation see Falkenstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 77f., No. 12.



monistic in character, which means both good and evil, life and death, blessing and punishment, beauty and ugliness were thought to be dispensed to mankind by one single divine being.

However, nature also provides phenomena which, so far as the human mind can conceive, do no harm to life on earth, never create destruction and ugliness, and are always beautiful and beneficial to human beings. These are the phenomena of the nocturnal sky, in particular the Moon and certain planets. The Moon-god Sîn, accordingly, was conceived by his worshippers as sublimely beautiful; he was the symbol of male beauty and strength.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, he was gracious and merciful, he did favors wherever his eye turned and saved whatever his hand seized.<sup>2</sup> His "word", i.e., the breath of his mouth, was thought to create justice and righteousness causing men to speak the truth.<sup>3</sup> Appearing, in the beginning of each month, as a small, slender sickle, then growing to his full size and beauty, finally waning and eventually disappearing he was a symbol of life; he was, therefore, revered as the creator and preserver of life on earth.<sup>4</sup> By repeating his course with no perceptible changes month after month, year after year, and generation after generation, he was the symbol of eternity.

If thus the Moon embodied for his worshippers all that is good, beautiful, and beneficial, life-giving and life-preserving, the question arose as to the cause of ugliness, evil, and death on earth. As none of these qualities was ascribed to the Moon-god, the existence of a second divine power which brought the evil things to the human race, suggested itself to the Moon-worshippers. The character of this force can be inferred from a legend preserved in a cycle of mythological poems which the ancients called *utukkî limnûti*, "The Evil Spirits".<sup>5</sup> Here it is related that a group of seven evil spirits who, because they always acted as a unit, were usually called the Evil Heptad, broke, with the help of Šamaš, the Sun-god, and Adad, the weather-god, into the vault of heaven and succeeded in darkening the Moon.

<sup>1</sup> See in particular ll. 10ff. of the hymn K.2861+4999+5068+5297 published in *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, IV<sup>2</sup>, pl. IX; for the latest translation see Falkenstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 222ff., No. 44.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibidem*, ll. 36f.

<sup>3</sup> See *ibidem*, l. 31.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibidem*, ll. 13-16.

<sup>5</sup> The work was published by R. C. Thompson, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, XVI, London, 1902. For a transliteration and translation by the same savant see *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia*, I, London, 1903.

Having thus deprived mankind and the earth of their divine protector, they returned to earth and slew, destroyed, ravaged, and killed whatsoever and whomsoever they met in their path. The nature of the Evil Heptad who thus appears as the Moon-god's arch-enemy, is described in detail in the series *utukkî limnûti*. They were evil winds which had their home in the Netherworld,<sup>1</sup> whence they emerged through holes and crevasses whenever the opportunity presented itself, in order to do their deadly and destructive work on earth. In fact, every evil thing in human life was attributed to the action of the Evil Seven. Not only were they thought to propagate fever and disease<sup>2</sup> and to destroy what human hands had built, but they also perverted the human mind causing men to go astray. Thus a most characteristic feature of the religion of Šin becomes apparent: A luminous heavenly phenomenon embodies the Good Principle, and a phenomenon assumed to originate in the darkness of the earth impersonates the Evil Principle. Since, as was mentioned above, Šin's spouse, Ȥarrânî, was one of the Evil Heptad, we must further conclude that the Good Principle was, at least according to a certain theology, a male, whereas the Evil Principle was a female.

The Evil Heptad, however, was not in itself a great god, which

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<sup>1</sup> The Evil Heptad was thought to be the offspring of Ereškigal, the goddess of the Netherworld; for a transliteration, translation, and discussion of the pertinent passages see H. and J. Lewy, *The Origin of the Week* (Hebrew Union College Annual, XVII, Cincinnati, 1943), pp. 17-23.

It may be remarked that the idea of the evil winds residing in the mountains that separate the lower world from the inhabited earth is not as farfetched as it might appear at first sight. Whosoever visited a mountain cave such as the famous "Cave of the Winds" near Manitou Springs, in Colorado, knows that in these caves strong currents of air, being thrown back and forth by the walls of the cave, produce a roaring sound which must have suggested to the Assyrians (as it did to the Indians in the region of Manitou) that the cave was the home of the winds. It is quite natural that such a mountain cave, particularly if it contained a spring, was regarded as an entrance to, or an exit from, the lower world where the evil winds were lurking, eager to break loose and wreak havoc on earth. At least one mountain cave was well known to the Assyrians: it was the cave, far to the north of Assyria, where the Tigris River has its source. On this cave and the Assyrian inscriptions incised in its walls see E. Unger, *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, XIII, Berlin, 1929, pp. 311f.; cf. G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge, 1930, pp. 110f.

<sup>2</sup> The reason why winds were assumed to be the carriers of disease must be sought in the sickening effect of certain winds, especially the one known as Ȥamsîn in the Near East and as Scirocco in Southern Europe. Needless to insist on the sickening qualities of the icy north wind which is said to be particularly bothersome in the region of Ȥarrân.

means it was not an independent divine will but merely the "weapon", or executive organ, of a greater deity. In the religion of the medieval Ḥarrânians, this great deity was Šamâl, the north wind,<sup>1</sup> whereas in the ancient religion the actions of the Evil Heptad were directed by Irra or Nergal,<sup>2</sup> the god of the Netherworld, of pestilence, of plague, and of war. That he actually embodied the Evil Principle in a dualistic religion is well illustrated by the afore-cited IRRA LEGEND. The subject of this composition can be briefly summarized as follows: While under the guidance of their patron god, the people on earth were pious and god-fearing and lived in unity among each other. Irra, however,

<sup>1</sup> According to an-Nadīm's report on the Ḥarrânian ritual of the 27th day of Ḥazirân, an offering was presented to "the heptad of gods (and) Šamâl" (p. 322, l. 22). Under the 3rd of Īlûl, the same author records the immolation of "eight sheep, seven for the (heptad of) gods and one for the god Šamâl" (p. 323, l. 15).

<sup>2</sup> According to the so-called IRRA LEGEND (for the latest publication see P. F. Gössmann Oesa, *Das Era-Epos*, Würzburg, 1956), the god Anu created the Evil Seven in order that they might "walk at the side" of Irra. In the series *utukki limnûti* it is stated that they "walk in front of Nergal" (see CT, XVI, pl. XV, col. V, ll. 16-17; pp. 74f. of Thompson's transliteration and translation). That Irra and Nergal are one and the same deity is shown by the equation "Irra is the Nergal of Kûtû", contained in rev., col. III, l. 27 of the text VAT 9418 published by Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, III, No. 142.

Nergal was a son of Enlil and thus a brother of Šin. In fact, the oldest texts mentioning Ur, the Moon-god's holy city, write its name with the ideogram ŠEŠ-ĒŠ, "The Brother's Abode" (see, e.g., ll. 3 and 5 of the foundation tablet of A-anni-padda, king of Ur, reproduced by C. J. Gadd, *History and Monuments of Ur*, London, 1929, pl. XIIb; see further the legend of the seal U.11825 published in facsimile by Sir Leonard Woolley, *Ur Excavations*, II, Plates, London and Philadelphia, 1934, pl. 191 and 198). The name shows that, at that time, the Moon-god was known as "The Brother". The same appears to have been true at the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur when the patron god's name was commonly written with the signs DINGIR-ŠEŠ-KI. The other brother's identity with Nergal can be inferred from the fact that the same name was occasionally applied to the divine lord of Kûtû: in l. 15 a b of the list of temple towers, K.4337 (published in *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, II, pl. 50), the *ziqurrat* of Kûtû is designated as É-DINGIR-ŠEŠ-KI, "House of DINGIR-ŠEŠ-KI". Cf. further the town of A-ġu<sup>KI</sup> which figures as a center of Nergal-worship in rev., col. III, l. 32 of the afore-quoted text VAT 9418.

Yet there is evidence to show that Šin and Nergal were regarded not only as brothers but as twin-brothers. In B.M. 93038 (*Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets*, XII, London, 1901, pl. XVI f.), Nergal is designated, in obv., col. II, l. 39, as MAŠ.DÀ, "The Sinister Twin". Even more significant is the evidence furnished by the astronomical commentary 81,7-1,4 (*The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, V, pl. 46, No. 1) where, in ll. 4f., the "big twins" (MAŠ.TAB.BA.GAL.GAL.LA) are identified with Lugal-girra and Meslamtaea who, in turn, are defined as Šin and Nergal. Cf. *Orientalia*, N.S., 28, 1959, p. 121, note 6.



disliked this state of affairs and planned to change it. As he could not carry out his plan so long as mankind was under the protection of its patron god, he lured the god of Good into the Netherworld and seized the reins of power on earth. As their new ruler, he first perverted the minds of men so that they began to fight among each other; the ensuing war gave him an opportunity to finish his work of destruction and annihilation on earth. When the patron god returned, he found his cities in ruins and his worshippers slain. The poem ends with an exhortation to mankind to appease the evil god by allotting a place in their cult to his service, so that he might spare them from another catastrophe like the one described. The subject matter of the legend as well as its treatment implies that, in his quality as a planet, the patron god was unable to protect the community of his worshippers during his periodic absences from the nocturnal sky.<sup>1</sup>

From this legend as well as from that previously quoted from *utukkê limnûti* a further significant trait of the dualistic religion becomes apparent. The god of Good, being unable to protect his congregation and to prevent the god of Evil from attacking it, was not an almighty god; on the contrary, he could not even protect himself against the ruse and hostility of his adversaries. This point is brought out with particular clarity in the so-called LAMENTATION OVER THE DESTRUCTION OF UR.<sup>2</sup> In this composition which originated in Ur, the center of Moon-worship in Southern Babylonia, the Moon-god's adversary was, even as in the belief of the medieval Harrânians, an evil wind-storm, a "storm which destroys the cities, a storm which destroys the houses" (l. 391), a "storm which finishes off what was good in the land" (l. 395), a "storm which caused the light to perish in the land" (l. 405). In vain Ningal, the Moon-god's consort, implored

<sup>1</sup> For the present discussion it does not matter that in the IRRA LEGEND the protector of mankind was not Šin but Marduk and the congregation not the Harrânians but the people of Babylon. That the idea was the same wherever a dualistic religion was practiced can be inferred from the dates on which the medieval Harrânians brought offerings to the Evil Seven and Šamâl: the 27th of Ĥazirân, the 27th of Tammûz, the 27th and 28th of Îlûl, etc. are the days preceding the Moon's conjunction with the Sun during which the Moon was, of course, invisible, and therefore assumed to be unable to protect his congregation against the action of the evil gods.

<sup>2</sup> See S. N. Kramer, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, Chicago, 1940. For the latest translation see A. Falkenstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-213. Whereas, as was stated above, in Harrân, the Evil Principle was embodied by the north wind, it appears that in Ur it was the south wind (ll. 192 and 197), a difference which is explained by the geographic and climatic conditions of the two cities.



the lord of the evil winds to spare her city and her worshippers, for Ur was attacked even though it was a good city and its citizens were pious and god-fearing. Yet here, too, in the absence of the patron god, human virtue did not resist the onslaught of the evil demons; "the mother did not look after her children, the father turned away from his children, in the town, the wife was abandoned, the child was abandoned . . ." (ll. 233-5). Accordingly, the dualists, unlike the believers in a monistic religion, did not regard misfortune and catastrophe as a punishment for iniquity; in their opinion, the evil gods who struck the righteous took particular delight in turning him away from the path of virtue which the patron god had established for his worshippers. The LAMENTATION ends with an outlook into a better future. Eventually, so it is hoped, the evil storms would be completely annihilated (l. 411), and from then on mankind would live in peace and bliss to the end of days under the Moon-god's guidance. This vision of the Golden Age reveals another important trait of the lunar religion: Once the lord of the evil winds was deprived of his weapons, he was powerless and the Moon-god, therefore, was the sole and omnipotent divine will. In other words, in the Golden Age the dualistic religion was bound to become a monistic religion, the sole but essential difference being that evil and sin would no longer exist since all mankind would worship the god of Good. From time to time, the ancients believed that the Golden Age had come or was about to come,<sup>1</sup> only to be disappointed when they realized that the ideal conditions did not last and that evil was still among them.

<sup>1</sup> One such period of expectation must have fallen into the time of the First Dynasty of Babylon. As was intimated above, p. 149 note 1, the IRRA LEGEND leaves no doubt that the religion of Marduk, the patron god of Babylon, was, at a certain time, a dualistic religion. Yet in later periods of Babylonian history, this religion had become monistic, for then it was Marduk alone who sent both Good and Evil to his people. The time when Marduk was assumed to have overcome the gods of evil for ever is reflected in *Enûma Eliš*, the epic dealing with Marduk's fight against an evil female demon, Tiâmat, whom he was assumed to have slain. Another period in which the coming of the Golden Age was believed to be imminent, at least in so far as the Moon-worshippers were concerned, was the time when Nabû-na'id, after his ten-year stay at Têma, returned to Babylon. His text H 2, which was written at that time, clearly reflects this idea. All the deities, including Nergal, the arch-enemy, were assumed to carry out the command of Sîn (see, e.g., col. II, ll. 1f.: "At the command of Sîn, Nergal shattered their [i.e. the enemies'] weapons"). All the kings who had formerly been hostile sent messengers to Babylon asking for reconciliation and good relations; and even the people of his own land who had rebelled against his religious reforms became, under the Moon-god's influence,

### III. *The Ḥarrânians' Ideas about Life after Death*

The belief that the evil god and his helpers had their home in the interior of the earth<sup>1</sup> led the Moon-worshippers to a peculiar fear of contact with the earth.<sup>2</sup> Contact with the earth was assumed to be particularly dangerous at the time of a person's death, when his soul departed from his body; for it was then that it could be seized by the evil spirits and taken to the Netherworld.<sup>3</sup> This idea becomes apparent from a passage in an inscription of the Assyrian king, Aššur-bân-apli. When speaking of his arch-enemy, the king of Elam, he remarks: "By an evil death they (i.e., the great gods) destroyed his soul, committed him to the Land of No Return".<sup>4</sup> In much the same manner, a "destructive" or "deleterious" death (מות לחה) was one of the imprecations upon those who would desecrate the sepulcher of two priests of the Moon-god whose funerary inscriptions, together with the sarcophagus in which they were laid to rest, were found in the vicinity of the town of Nêrab in Northern Syria.<sup>5</sup> A first indication

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"true in word and in heart" (col. II, l.7). When this dream ended after a few short years, the Ḥarrânians obviously reverted to their dualistic religion which they continued to practice until the Middle Ages.

<sup>1</sup> In the LAMENTATION OVER THE DESTRUCTION OF UR there is an allusion to this belief. In l. 111, Ningal, in her song of mourning over the destruction of her city, tells the storm to "return to the steppe", "steppe" being a term frequently used as a euphemism for the lower world.

<sup>2</sup> As was pointed out in pp. 65f. of our afore-quoted study "*The Babylonian Background of the Kay Kâûs Legend*", the early worshippers of the Moon were not farmers who tilled the soil but Aramaean and proto-Aramaean nomads who roamed the Syro-Arabian desert.

<sup>3</sup> By so doing, the evil spirits prevented the deceased person's soul from ascending to the realm of the stars. As was observed on p. 93 of our afore-quoted study, the worshippers of the heavenly bodies expected their souls after their death to ascend to heaven and be united with their god. That other Western Semites had similar ideas can be inferred from the so-called HADAD INSCRIPTION left by king Panammû of Šam'al and Ia'di, one of the Aramaean vassals of Tukulti-apil-ešarra III of Assyria. Panammû advised his successor to present a sacrifice to the god Hadad when he took possession of his father's throne, and to pray "that Panammû's soul might eat with Hadad and that Panammû's soul might drink with Hadad". (Transliteration and translation of the text are found, inter alia, in Cooke, *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Oxford, 1903, pp. 159ff., No. 61. Cf. M. Lidzbarski, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik nebst ausgewählten Inschriften*, Weimar, 1898, pp. 440ff.)

<sup>4</sup> See the text K.2867+Ki.1904-10-9,11 (published by Th. Bauer, *Das Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals*, Leipzig, 1933, I, pl. 31; II, p. 87), edge, l. α.

<sup>5</sup> See Cooke, *op. cit.*, Nos. 64f.; on the circumstances in which the stele was discovered see below, p. 155 with note 1.

as to the death considered "evil" or "destructive" is contained in Aššur-bân-apli's ANNALS in a passage dealing with the fate of some of the king's defeated adversaries. With regard to those on whom he had mercy he uses the expression *balât napištišunu aqbi*, "I granted (lit., "I commanded") the life of their souls".<sup>1</sup> Previously, however, he referred to enemies who had been put to the sword or died from starvation, it being implied that their souls had not been saved. It is, therefore, apparent that these two ways of dying were assumed to destroy the soul. A more extensive list of "evil deaths" is contained in a further passage of Aššur-bân-apli's ANNALS. Here he reports that, on the eve of an important military expedition, he had requested an oracle from a priest of the Moon-god. The priest beheld a dream-vision in the course of which he received the following answer:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the so-called RASSAM CYLINDER, col. IV, l. 95 (M. Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige*, II, Leipzig, 1916, p. 40), and cf. *ibidem*, col. II, l. 8.

<sup>2</sup> In his dream, the priest saw the Moon-god's statue on the pedestal of which he read the answer to his inquiry. The priest obviously did not expect to see the Moon-god himself, because, in the opinion of his worshippers, this deity was too high and too sublime to appear, and even less to address himself, to a human being. Not even Nabû-na'id who, being a king, was assumed to be of divine descent, pretended that the Moon-god had spoken to him although, in the introductory lines of his inscription H 2, he stresses the extraordinary honor which the deity had bestowed upon him by descending to earth so as to appear to him in his dream. According to Nabû-na'id's afore-quoted inscription No. 1 (see above, p. 141, note 5), the actual message which the Moon-god wished to convey to him was transmitted by Marduk; as the latter deity was revered as the special protector of building operations, it was logical that it was he who acted as the mediator informing Nabû-na'id of the supreme god's order to rebuild Eḫulḫul, the temple of Sîn at Ḥarrân. From aš-Šahristânî (*op. cit.*, II, p. 244) and ad-Dimišqî (*op. cit.*, p. 47) it is learned that these ideas were preserved in the doctrine of the medieval Ḥarrânians; for these authors credit the Ḥarrânians with the belief that, owing to the supreme god's unfathomable character, communication between him and a human worshipper had to go through the medium of a lower deity. The only exceptions to this rule appear to have been the *entu*-priestesses who, as described by Herodotus (I.181 f.), were assumed to have been visited by the god when they slept in the sacred chamber on the summit of the temple towers. As we hope to show in a forthcoming article, Nabû-na'id's mother, even as subsequently his daughter, appears to have been, in her earlier years, one of these priestesses.

For the reasons outlined, we cannot agree with Gadd, *loc. cit.*, p. 74, note 2, who sees a contradiction between Nabû-na'id's text No. 1 where Marduk transmitted the order to rebuild Eḫulḫul and col. II of the funerary inscription of Nabû-na'id's mother according to which Eḫulḫul was rebuilt at the command of Sîn. Gadd thinks that the introduction of Marduk in text No. 1 was "for the benefit of the Babylonians", "reducing the Moon-god to a mere spectator". Yet



"Those who plan evil, undertake hostility against Aššur-bân-apli, the king of Assyria, I shall present with an evil death: With an iron dagger, (in) a blazing abyss of fire,<sup>1</sup> (through) famine, (through) pestilence I shall finish off their souls". The reason why death by the sword was considered the worst fate that could befall a person can be inferred from two biblical passages (Deut. 12.23 and Lev. 17.14) which make it clear that, in the opinion of the ancient Semites, the blood was the carrier of the soul.<sup>2</sup> That this view was shared by the worshippers of the heavenly bodies follows, *inter alia*, from the threat in Ḥammurapi's Code of Laws that he who would violate the laws would have "his soul poured out like water".<sup>3</sup> In much the same manner, an Assyrian religious text<sup>4</sup> threatens: "Whosoever steals this tablet, may the god Nabû . . . pour out his soul like water" (*naṣṣassu kîma mē litbuk*). It thus becomes apparent that if, in death, a person's blood ran into the earth, his soul was assumed to fall victim to the evil spirits who retained it in the Netherworld, "The Land of No Return", thus preventing it from ascending to heaven and living for ever with its

Nabû-na'id is not known to have, at any time of his career, made any concessions to the "taste of the Babylonian readers". In fact, his refusal to make any concessions to the Babylonians prompted the Babylonian priesthood to call on Cyrus in order to deliver them from their own king. Moreover, there is no evidence that the text No. 1 was destined to be read in the city of Babylon. As it is the only one of Nabû-na'id's extant inscriptions in which he introduces himself with all the titles customary among the Neo-Assyrian kings but not used in Babylonia (cf. our pertinent remarks on p. 75 of the "*The Babylonian Background of the Kay Kâûs Legend*"), this text obviously was intended for readers of the former Assyrian orbit rather than for the people of Babylon.

<sup>1</sup> (*Ina*) *ḥa-an-ṭi mi-ḡit girri* (see col. III, l. 125 of the RASSAM CYLINDER). A comparison of this passage with the parallel report in col. IV, ll. 51ff. and 57ff. relating to the suicide of Šamaš-šum-ukîn in the flames of beleaguered Babylon makes it likely that *ḥanṭi* is stressed and belongs to *miḡit girri* and not to the preceding *paṭar parzilli* as assumed by Streck, *loc. cit.*, and in vol. 6, p. 71b s.v. *ḥamṭu* B of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary. (In fact, a "sword" or "dagger" is less likely to be qualified as "flaming" or "blazing" than a conflagration.) The mention of Šamaš-šum-ukîn seeking a voluntary death in the flames makes it at the same time impossible to render *miḡit girri* in our context by "fever" (as does Streck, *op. cit.*, p. 33, note 6) or "flash of lightning"; for it is obvious that Aššur-bân-apli's ANNALS would not relate first the prophecy and then the actual outcome of the campaign against Šamaš-šum-ukîn to which it referred if the prophecy had not come true in every detail.

<sup>2</sup> By eating a slaughtered animal's blood together with its flesh one was assumed to consume its soul.

<sup>3</sup> *Tabāk napištišu kîma mē*; see rev., col. XXVI, ll. 93f.

<sup>4</sup> See Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, No. 203; G. Offner, *Revue d'Assyriologie*, XLIV, 1950, p. 137.



god. It was, therefore, logical for Šamaš-šum-ukîn, Aššur-bân-apli's unfaithful brother, and others who were threatened by execution<sup>1</sup> to annihilate their souls by burning their blood together with their bodies rather than face the prospect of being delivered for ever to the evil spirits.

It stands to reason that the ideas about the dead or dying person's blood coming into contact with the earth made it impossible for the worshippers of the heavenly bodies and particularly of the Moon to bury their dead in the ground as did the Babylonians who worshipped other gods. In fact, in the early years of the second millennium B.C., the sedentary Babylonians contemptuously described certain nomads as those who, after their death, were not buried,<sup>2</sup> a statement which is pertinent since, as was recalled before,<sup>3</sup> the religion of the Moon originated among the tribes of the desert. It is equally obvious that, in view of the horror with which the sedentary Babylonians speak of the dead "whom no grave covereth, who lie uncovered, whose head is not covered with dust",<sup>4</sup> the nomads were compelled to modify their funerary customs when they settled in the civilized regions of the Fertile Crescent. Yet there is evidence to show that even centuries after the nomadic tribes were settled, their final resting places were adapted to the idea that the soul of the deceased had to be protected from the evil spirits. We refer in the first place to the afore-mentioned funereal installation at the village of Nêrab in Northern Syria, where archaeologists discovered an artificial hill built from soil gathered in

<sup>1</sup> This applies to Zimri, king of Israel, who is said in the Bible to have hurled himself into the flames of his palace when his enemy, Omri, was on the point of capturing his capital city (see I Kings 16.19). Greek sources attribute a similar death to Šamaš-šum-ukîn's nephew, king Šîn-šarra-iškun of Assyria, who is said to have set fire to the citadel of Nineveh and burnt himself to death when he realized that any further resistance of beleaguered Nineveh had become hopeless. See Schnabel, *Berosos*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1923, p. 271, fragments 48 and 48<sup>a</sup>, where Šîn-šarra-iškun figures as Sarakos.

<sup>2</sup> See E. Chiera, *Sumerian Epics and Myths*, Chicago, 1934, No. 58, col. IV, l. 29. Cf. Falkenstein, *Compte Rendu de la seconde Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, Paris, 1951, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p 151, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> See col. II, ll. 9-11 of the Sumerian incantation K.156+K.246 published by Haupt, *Akkadische und Sumerische Keilschrifttexte*, Leipzig, 1881, pp. 82ff., No. 11; for a translation of the relevant passage see Thompson, p. XXXI of the work quoted above, p. 146, note 5. Cf. tablet XII, ll. 151f. of the EPIC OF GILGAMES: "He whose corpse lieth in the steppe (*ina šêri*) . . . his spirit resteth not in the earth".

the environs of the town.<sup>1</sup> On what had once been the summit of the artificial hill, a sarcophagus of basalt-stone was resting on a layer of gravel. The sarcophagus which had originally been covered by a lid of basalt fastened to the lower part with lead plugs contained the skeletons of two men. Not far from the sarcophagus, two steles hewn in the same basalt were standing upright, on a level with the sarcophagus. The two steles, one of which was quoted previously,<sup>2</sup> identified the two persons resting in the sarcophagus as two priests of the Moon-god Sîn. The artificial hill and even more so the heavy stone of the casket as well as the layer of gravel obviously served the purpose of separating the dead bodies from the earth, the seat of the evil spirits and, at the same time, bringing them as close as possible to the heavenly habitation of the Moon-god whom the priests obviously had hoped to join after their death.

A different type of funereal installation reflecting, however, the same idea as that of Nêrab was observed by explorers near the oasis of Têrnâ, in Northern Arabia. Although only one inscribed monument is known from this site as yet, the evidence is sufficient to show that that town was a center of Moon-worship,<sup>3</sup> and the sepulchers in question must, therefore, be included in the present discussion. The cemetery, which is located at some distance from both the ancient and

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *Études d'Archéologie Orientale*, II, Paris, 1897, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 151 with note 5.

<sup>3</sup> As early as 1930, Dougherty (*Am. Journal of Archaeology*, XXXIV, 1930, p. 307) called attention to the fact that the lower register of the so-called Têrnâ-Stele shows a worshipper standing before an altar surmounted by the head of a bull, the symbol of the Moon-god in South-Arabia. J. Lewy, who discussed this evidence in 1946 (*Hebrew Union College Annual*, XIX, 1946, p. 447) added to this both literary and monumental examples from Babylonia of the Moon-god being invoked as a bull. Cf. also the name *dRîm-dSîn* which identifies Sîn with the god Rîm, "Wild Bull"; the latter deity's name appears, among the West Semitic population of Mesopotamia, as theophorous element in names such as *I-din-dRî-im* (see the tablet AO.4656 published by Thureau-Dangin, *Lettres et Contrats de la Première Dynastie Babylonienne*, Paris, 1910, No. 238, l. 16). That the Moon-cult in the oasis-town of Têrnâ is at least as old as the time of Nabû-na'id can be inferred from the fact that, according to the so-called "VERSE ACCOUNT OF NABONIDUS" (see S. Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, London, 1924, pp. 27-97 and plates V-X), the king of Babylon used his stay at Têrnâ to reconstruct the city and to provide it with a royal palace like that of Babylon (cf. the translation of the passage by B. Landsberger and Th. Bauer, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, XXXVII, 1925, p. 91). It goes without saying that if Nabû-na'id built a palace at Têrnâ and resided there for ten years, the town must have had a Moon-temple in which he could worship his god.

the modern town of Têma, is covered at irregular intervals by round tumuli built of stone and sand. On the summit of these hillocks, some of which reach a height of 3 meters, there were remnants of a funereal chamber measuring about 2 by 1½ meters. All around the slopes of the tumuli were layers of stone which, to all appearances, were intended as steps facilitating the access to the funereal chamber.<sup>1</sup>

Although archaeological investigation in Assyria proper has not as yet revealed any evidence as to the sepulchers of the last six Assyrian kings who were particularly devoted to the cult of the Moon,<sup>2</sup> we shall not fail in assuming that, when Aššur-bân-apli built for himself a mausoleum in the city of Aššur,<sup>3</sup> this structure reflected the same ideas as the resting places of the priests of Nêrab and of the ancient people of Têma.

#### IV. *How did the Iranians get acquainted with the Religion of Ĥarrân?*

It will be noted that several of the features of the Ĥarrânian religion briefly described in the preceding pages have their parallel in the Zoroastrian religion as known from Greek sources and as practised under the Arsacids and the Sassanians. As is well known, Zoroastrianism, too, was a dualistic religion in which Hormuzd, the god of light, was the creator and preserver of all that is good and beautiful, whereas Ahriman represented the evil principle. These two deities, too, were conceived as twin-brothers, their father, Zurvan, or "Chronos", thus corresponding to Enlil, the father of Šin and Nergal. Like their counterparts in the lunar religion, the Zoroastrian gods of good and evil were engaged in an unceasing fight which, it was hoped, was to end with the eventual defeat of the evil spirits and the coming of the Golden Age. Even the millennia-old symbol of the Moon-cult

<sup>1</sup> See Jaussen and Savignac, *Mission archéologique en Arabie*, II, Paris, 1914, pp. 153-5.

<sup>2</sup> By a strange coincidence, Aššur-bân-apli was, so far as is known, the only one among these kings who died a natural death from old age. Sargon, as is well known, was slain in battle; Sennacherib, his son, was murdered by one of his sons; Esarhaddon, his successor, took sick and died during a campaign against Egypt. Aššur-bân-apli's son, Šin-šarra-iškun, is reported to have died in the flames of his beleaguered capital city (see above, p. 154, note 1). Aššur-bân-apli's other son, Aššur-etel-ilâni, disappeared after a short reign, having been killed, in all likelihood, in a fratricidal war.

<sup>3</sup> On the mausoleum (*bît kimahhi*) which Aššur-bân-apli built in the city of Aššur before ascending the throne, see Weidner, *Archiv für Orientforschung*, XIII, 1939-41, pp. 213ff. and Ebeling, *Stiftungen und Vorschriften für assyrische Tempel*, *Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, No. 23, 1954, p. 18.



and of the city of Harrân,<sup>1</sup> viz., the crescent including between its horns a star, occurs not infrequently on gems from the Sassanian period.<sup>2</sup>

Like the Moon-worshippers, the Zoroastrians believed in the existence of a human soul as distinct from the body. They, too, assumed that a pious person's spirit survived his physical death; and, as Pehlevi texts refer to this life after death as "the best existence",<sup>3</sup> they, too, appear to have assumed that the soul would ascend to heaven and be for ever in the presence of its god. Much as the Moon-worshippers, the Zoroastrians believed that the eternal life of their souls was endangered by contact of a dead body with the earth, the seat of the evil spirits; accordingly, they, too, did not bury their dead but deposited them either on a natural elevation or, as do the present-day Parsees, on the summit of a funereal tower.<sup>4</sup>

Space does not permit to discuss in detail any further features common to the Moon-cult and the Sassanian state religion. Suffice it to mention that the concept of the divine origin of human kings which, as was shown elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> is a characteristic trait of the religion of the heavenly bodies, is clearly traceable in the inscriptions of the Sassanian kings.<sup>6</sup> Finally, attention must be called to a peculiarity of the Sassanian calendar which is paralleled by a habit of the Neo-Assyrian Moon-worshippers. As is well known, not only all the months of the Sassanian calendar (except for the first), but also the thirty days of the months bear the name of a deity, the first being called Hormuzd for the god of the good principle. In Aššur-bân-apli's

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., the references quoted above, p. 142, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., A. Mordtmann, *Studien über geschnittene Steine mit Pehlevi Inschriften*, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, XVIII, 1864, pl. I, No. 61 and p. 25; pl. II, No. 143 and p. 41; pl. I, No. 28; pl. III, Nos. 92, 102, and 154; pl. IV, No. 49.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., DĒNKART, Book VII, chapter V.1 (West, *The Sacred Books of the East*, XXXVII, Oxford, 1892, *Pahlavi Texts*, part IV, p. 73); chapter VI.1 (*ibidem*, p. 77).

<sup>4</sup> See J. Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, II, Paris, 1892, pp. 155ff.

<sup>5</sup> *The Babylonian Background of the Kay Kâūs Legend*, pp. 78f.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., the legend inscribed on the relief of Šâpûr II at the Tâq-i Bustân (published in facsimile, transliteration, and translation by Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, Berlin, 1920, p. 67): "This is the image of the Mazda-worshipping god Šâpûr, king of kings of Iran and Aniran, who is a scion of the gods, the son of the Mazda-worshipping god Hormuzd, king of kings of Iran and Aniran, who is a scion of the gods, the grandson of the god Narseh, king of kings".



inscriptions, there occur formulae such as these: "In the month of Aiaru, the month of Ea, the lord of mankind, on the twelfth day, a favorable day, (the day of) the food-offering of Gula";<sup>1</sup> "in the month of Simânu, the month of Sîn, the foremost and prime son of Enlil, on the 25th day, (the day of) the procession of the divine lady of Babylon";<sup>2</sup> "in the month of Abu, the month of the bow-star, the heroic daughter of Sin, on the 3rd day, (the day of) the vigil for the king of the gods, Marduk";<sup>3</sup> "in the month of Ulûlu, (the month of) the service of Ištar, on the feast of the sublime Aššur".<sup>4</sup>

When trying to determine the period during which the beliefs and practices of the Moon-worshippers became known to the Iranians, it is not without interest to notice that the massive rock-graves of Darius I and his immediate successors betray no relationship to the sepulchers of the worshippers of the Moon. Nor do these kings appear to have been acquainted with the notion of the divine origin of earthly kings; their names as well as those of their defunct ancestors are always preceded, in their inscriptions, by the determinative characterizing them as ordinary human males. Likewise, the dates appearing in their texts simply number the days instead of naming them for a deity. The divine emblem appearing on their reliefs is not the lunar crescent but the winged solar disk which they, to all appearances, took over from the well-known emblem of the god Aššur.

There is, however, one Achaemenian king whose sepulcher differs conspicuously from those of Darius I and his successors: It is the tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae which consists of a stage tower of six steps crowned by a tomb chamber. According to Arrian's description,<sup>5</sup> the king's body rested in a golden coffin within this lofty funereal chamber. Being built, according to Herzfeld,<sup>6</sup> with a Babylonian stage-tower in mind, this structure is obviously influenced by the ideas of the lunar religion.<sup>7</sup> Equally significant is Herzfeld's

<sup>1</sup> See col. I, ll. 11f. of the RASSAM CYLINDER.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibidem*, col. VIII, ll. 96ff. Cf. the parallel passage of the text K.2802, col. VI, ll. 17ff. (Streck, *op. cit.*, II, p. 204).

<sup>3</sup> See col. IX, ll. 9ff. of the RASSAM CYLINDER.

<sup>4</sup> See CYLINDER B, col. V, ll. 77f.

<sup>5</sup> ANABASIS OF ALEXANDER, VI.29.

<sup>6</sup> *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, I, Berlin, 1929-30, pp. 8-10.

<sup>7</sup> A structure named Gûr-i-Dukhtar, "The Daughter's Tomb", which bears a considerable resemblance to the tomb of Cyrus was recently discovered by Professor Vanden Berghe in the plain of Buzpar, in the province of Fars. A description of the structure which Professor Vanden Berghe discussed in a

observation that also a temple discovered by him at Pasargadae shows affinities to the Assyro-Babylonian stage-towers and thus differs conspicuously from the places of worship of Cyrus' successors. Since, as the present writer pointed out elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> the stage-towers were an indispensable implement of the worship of the heavenly bodies, serving as both observatory and place of contact between a human being and his god, the two structures at Pasargadae suggest that it was under Cyrus that the religious concepts of the Moon-cult were first propagated in Iran. At first approach this conclusion appears to be incompatible with Cyrus' well-known inscription, the so-called "Proclamation to the Babylonians"; for there it is stated that Cyrus conquered Babylonia on orders of Marduk, the god of Babylon, who entrusted him with the rule over the world and led him into his holy city so that he might put an end to the reign of Nabû-na'id, the king who placed the Moon-god above all other deities, including Marduk. Yet the excavations at Ur have furnished evidence to indicate that Cyrus changed his religious policy some time after the conquest of Babylonia. Whereas in his first onslaught his soldiery destroyed all the buildings in the sacred area of Ur which Nabû-na'id had erected,<sup>2</sup> he subsequently restored at least some of the temples and returned them to their former use.<sup>3</sup>

Even more significant is the wording of a fragmentary cylinder inscription of Cyrus found at Ur<sup>4</sup> which contains this statement: "Sîn, the illuminator of heaven and earth, under a favorable omen,

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lecture at the Rencontre Assyriologique in Paris, on June 23, 1961, will, as he kindly informs me, be published in the first issue of the new periodical *Iranica Antiqua*.

<sup>1</sup> *The Babylonian Background of the Kay Kâûs Legend*, pp. 87ff.

<sup>2</sup> See, especially, col. VI, ll. 17ff. of the VERSE ACCOUNT (cf. above, p. 155, note 3).

<sup>3</sup> See C. J. Gadd, *History and Monuments of Ur*, pp. 250f. However, the assumption of Gadd that the restoration served the purpose of receiving the Moon-god's statue after its return from Babylon whither it allegedly had been brought by Nabû-na'id is contradicted by col. III, l. 21 of the NABONIDUS CHRONICLE (Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-123 and pl. XI-XIV), from which it follows that the return of the deities which Nabû-na'id had taken to Babylon took place a few months after Cyrus had conquered Babylon. At that time the temples which had been razed to the ground could not have been rebuilt. Moreover, there is no evidence that the statue of the Moon-god was taken from Ur to Babylon; in the enumeration of the deities that came to Babylon (col. III of the CHRONICLE) this deity is not mentioned.

<sup>4</sup> See C. J. Gadd and L. Legrain, *Royal Inscriptions, Ur Excavations*, Texts, I, London and Philadelphia, 1928, No. 307, p. 96.

delivered into my hands the four quarters of the world". In other words, Cyrus here credits the Moon-god Sîn with having delivered to him the realm formerly ruled by Nabû-na'id, whereas in the Proclamation he attributed his success to the guidance of Marduk. In addition, the reference to the omen suggests that he belatedly consulted the astronomers with respect to the horoscope at the time of his campaign against Nabû-na'id.

Perplexing as it might appear at first sight that the victorious Cyrus should have embraced the religion the principal propagator of which was the vanquished Nabû-na'id, the possible reasons for this conversion can be gleaned from the extant sources. From col. V, ll. 4-7 of the "VERSE ACCOUNT" combined with col. I, l. 42 of Nabû-na'id's inscription H 2 from Ḥarrân it can be inferred that, during Nabû-na'id's ten-year stay at Têma, hostilities between him and Cyrus had occurred.<sup>1</sup> Both passages make it clear, on the other hand, that this incident had been settled to Nabû-na'id's entire satisfaction and that "reconciliation and goodwill" prevailed.<sup>2</sup> In other words, it is apparent that a peace treaty had been concluded between the two kings, and that Cyrus had broken this treaty when he attacked Babylonia in Nabû-na'id's seventeenth year. Since the Iranian religions no less than those of the Semites condemn the violation of a solemn agreement, the aggressor had to fear henceforth the wrath and the retaliation of all the deities of both contracting parties who had been called upon in the treaty, as was customary in the ancient Near East, to punish the violator. Foremost among the deities offended by Cyrus' breach of faith was, of course, Nabû-na'id's supreme god, Sîn. And the Aramaeans of Babylonia who were the main supporters of Nabû-na'id could not fail to ascribe every misfortune that befell the

<sup>1</sup> Col. II, ll. 15f. of the CHRONICLE suggest that these hostilities took place in Nabû-na'id's ninth regnal year and were connected with Cyrus' campaign against Lydia; for as the king of Persia is said to have negotiated the Tigris River below Arbela and proceeded from there to western Asia Minor, he could hardly fail to march through Babylonian territory. The fact that, according to Herodotus (I.77), the king of Lydia sent emissaries to Babylon to ask for Nabû-na'id's help against Cyrus may also point to tension between the two rulers.

<sup>2</sup> In col. I, ll. 38ff. of his inscription H 2, Nabû-na'id lists Media among the countries and peoples whose rulers "(formerly) hostile" sent embassies to him asking for "reconciliation and goodwill". That *sulammû* means "reconciliation" was first pointed out by J. Lewy, *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft*, 29, 1924, 2, p. 83, sub Z.29. See now also E. Weidner, *Die Inschriften Tukulti-Ninurtas I. und seiner Nachfolger*, Graz, 1959, p. 41, ad No. 36.



Persians in the months and years after the conquest of Babylon to the vengeance of Sin. That misfortunes actually began to occur shortly after Cyrus' entry into Babylonia is related in the CHRONICLE. First, Ugbaru, the commander of the troops which had seized the capital, died suddenly (col. III, l. 22). A few months later, the king's spouse died (col. III, l. 23). Further threatening events were related in the fragmentary col. IV of the Chronicle which possibly referred to the fact that, not even one year after having appointed his son Cambyses viceroy of Babylonia, Cyrus was compelled to recall him.<sup>1</sup> Thus the only way left open to Cyrus of avoiding a continuous series of catastrophes was to seek Nabû-na'id's help and advice upon the means by which the offended Moon-god could be appeased. That a reconciliation between Cyrus and Nabû-na'id actually took place can be inferred from the report of Berossos that Nabû-na'id was appointed by Cyrus to rule over the Iranian province of Carmania.<sup>2</sup> Once established in Iran, the fanatical worshipper of the Moon-god and offspring of Ḥarrân who possessed all the learning and wisdom of his time could hardly fail to impress his ideas on his new subjects.

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence to this effect is provided by the date formulae of the contemporary Babylonian contract tablets; for the details and references see Kugler, *Sternkunde und Sterndienst in Babel*, II, Münster, 1909/10, pp. 397ff. and more recently Dubberstein in *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, LV, 1938, pp. 417-19.

<sup>2</sup> See Schnabel, *Berossos*, p. 274, fragments 53 and 54.